

385  
Am 33e

# EXPRESS SERVICE



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**JAMES C. FARGO**  
PRESIDENT  
AMERICAN EXPRESS COMPANY





385  
Am 33e

9 JAN 1917

## EXPRESS SERVICE



ONE of the marked characteristics of the living age is its critical spirit. Nothing is taken for granted. Past and present are alike subject to investigation.

Recently the large express companies of this country have come in for their share of investigation and criticism, much of the latter being hasty, unwarranted and without full consideration of the facts.



THE ORIGINAL EXPRESSMAN  
CARRIED SHIPMENTS IN A CARPET BAG.

Many citizens who are not regular shippers do not realize what the Express Service has done to develop the nation's resources during the seventy odd years of its existence; what it is doing today for the commercial interests of the country and in what respect such service, along lines other than transportation, promotes the comfort, convenience and well being of the general public.

In the first place, Express Service is an exclusively American idea. No other country has anything like it. What is known as "Express traffic" in this country is



handled in Europe through the medium of the Parcel Post up to a limit of 11 lbs. Shipments above that weight and under 100 lbs. are usually forwarded via fast or slow freight service. Fast freight service in Europe is considerably slower than the fast freight service maintained in this country.

There is no comparison whatever between express in this country and what is in effect abroad.

## ORIGIN OF EXPRESS SERVICE IN UNITED STATES

Let us go back to 1841, when Fargo, Adams, Wells, Butterfield, Dinsmore and Livingston originated and presented to the public the first express service following its beginnings in the hands of stage coach drivers and before the era of railroads.



METHOD OF TRANSPORTATION BEFORE ERA OF RAILROADS.

The service was not then confined to the mere transportation of shipments any more than it is today. It undertook, and does now, to do the errands of its patrons, to carry their valuables, to collect their money due on goods, deeds, accounts, bills, notes; to pay their debts of all kinds, to buy articles of every sort for them, to sell their products, to serve legal papers, claim baggage at railroad stations and steamship piers, and perform any legitimate service requiring special and personal attention at home or abroad.

Long before the Government was able to transmit letters in unsettled parts of the country the express companies were handling these intimate and necessary exchanges of correspondence, and also the remittance of small sums of money. The Express Companies also made possible the more economical transfer of currency exchanges between the banks of the country and established through their own efforts the produce commission business.

All of this (with the exception of the carriage of letters) is still being undertaken with many additions.

### C. O. D. SYSTEM

Originated by the express companies many years ago, the C. O. D. system, a simple and effective method



of selling merchandise without risk to the owner and shipper, has been and is an important factor in extending trade relations between thousands of manufacturers, merchants and individuals. Without it, the purchaser would be obliged to establish a credit or pay in advance of selection, thereby limiting his opportunities to purchase in the market he might consider most desirable.

Approximately 5,000,000 C. O. D. shipments are handled by express companies annually.

### EXPRESS COMMISSIONS

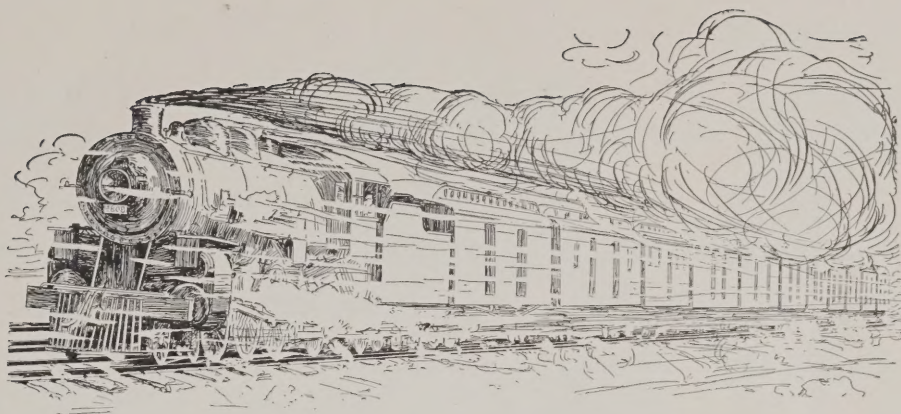
As for what are termed "commissions" executed by express companies, here are two small ones and two of particular moment:

A resident in a small town breaks a part of his stove and is unable to replace the broken part in his town. He goes to the express agent and writes an order to have it duplicated in the nearest city. The order is filled by special messenger immediately upon its receipt and the desired new part is returned by next train.

A particular kind of medicine which cannot be had in a small town is required for an invalid. The express company will procure it from the nearest large city and return it without delay.

A citizen of Los Angeles, Cal., recently desired to pay a sum of money by cable in the interior of Africa





TODAY SPECIAL TRAINS CARRYING EXPRESS CARS ONLY AND RUNNING AT GREAT SPEED, TRAVERSE THE CONTINENT VIA ALL PRINCIPAL LINES OF RAILWAY.

to secure the execution of a contract. The banks of his city were unable to do it for him, but the American Express Company undertook the commission, cabled the money to an African seaport, sent an agent inland with it to the end of the railroad and from there by muleback to destination, made the payment, secured the signed contract and returned it to the Los Angeles citizen, thereby performing for him an important special service which he could not have obtained in any other way.

A resident of Toledo died in Italy. His widow, aged, sick, grief-stricken, in a strange land, was helpless. One of the relatives at home appealed to the American Express Company for assistance and the result is best told in his own words, as follows:

“In this case Mr. B., who was accompanied by his wife, died suddenly while abroad, the rest of the family all being in the United States. It was

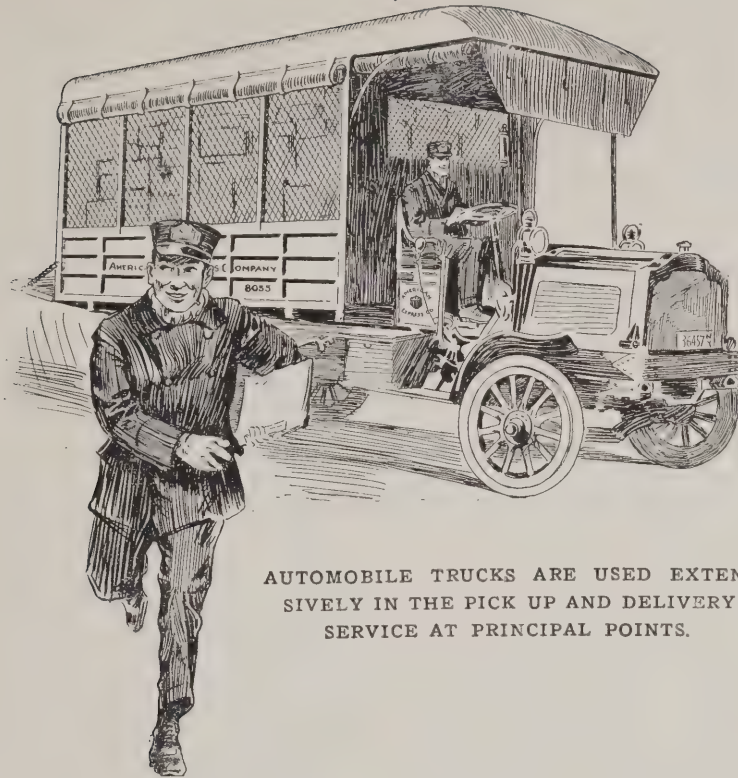
impossible for any of the relatives to reach Monaco within ten days. Mrs. B's health being such that it was impossible for her to attend to the details of transferring the remains home, I was recommended to take the matter up with one of our express companies, and turn the entire matter over to them.

"They immediately cabled to their Paris Office, instructing their Agent to go to Monaco and take full charge of the arrangements. He arrived there the following day, paid the doctor bills, hotel bills, attended to all the undertaking matters, and accompanied Mrs. B. and the body to Paris, where he secured accommodations on a steamer, and in fact, attended to every minute detail as carefully as though he were one of the family.

"After Mrs. B's departure from France he took charge of her automobile and saw that it was crated and shipped carefully. This was all attended to promptly, and daily reports were received by the family as to the progress they were making and as to Mrs. B's health.

"When Mrs. B. arrived in New York the express company attended to getting her through the Customs, and transferred the remains from the dock to the station.





AUTOMOBILE TRUCKS ARE USED EXTENSIVELY IN THE PICK UP AND DELIVERY SERVICE AT PRINCIPAL POINTS.

“This was an entirely new experience to me, and it is my firm belief that it would be impossible to receive such service from any other corporation in the world, not excepting the Government.”

EXPRESS SERVICE

AN AID TO THE INDUSTRIAL GROWTH

OF THE COUNTRY

And what is being done by the Express Service on the lines of industrial growth?

Going back to the early days of the business we find that the American Express Company itself purchased oysters, shad, lobsters and other salt water products in the East and sold them in the West and in return procured

game and other products of the West and disposed of them in the East, thus opening up two market fields.

While the Company does not now purchase and sell food or other commodities for its own account, it performs a similar service for the benefit of patrons through its Order and Commission or Industrial Department, and Special Agents are employed to encourage the production of fruit and vegetables in all parts of the country.

The express companies were in many instances the first to suggest to persons residing in places having suitable and favorable soil, climate and location, the possibility of raising fruits, berries and vegetables and of shipping them to meet the demand elsewhere. This increased production resulted in the development of land which up to that time had been non-productive or unprofitable, and furnished new employment and income to those communities.

It has been reliably stated that the strawberry growing industry on the Illinois Central Railroad in Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee had its beginning about the year 1886 in gifts of strawberry plants by an express company to residents of Independence, La., and that community has since become one of the largest strawberry producing communities in the United States.

Through encouragement by American Express Company of production, its assistance in marketing products, in providing refrigerator cars and special train service, and



giving special attention to the business at points of origin and destination and in transit, the strawberry traffic from the above territory alone has grown since 1897 from 77 to over 500 carloads yearly, for the movement of which 54 special express trains were operated during the season, distributed to—

Boston, Mass.	Milwaukee, Wis.
Buffalo, N. Y.	Minneapolis, Minn.
Cedar Rapids, Ia.	New York, N. Y.
Chicago, Ill.	Oklahoma City, Okla.
Cleveland, O.	Omaha, Neb.
Columbus, O.	Pittsburgh, Pa.
Denver, Colo.	St. Louis, Mo.
Detroit, Mich.	St. Paul, Minn.
Indianapolis, Ind.	Seattle, Wash.
Kansas City, Mo.	Sioux City, Ia.
Lincoln, Neb.	Waterloo, Ia.
Louisville, Ky.	Watertown, S. D.

Over 220,000 cases of berries were also shipped by express in less than carload lots from the same locality on regular trains.

Similar instances could be quoted where the express company first suggested and encouraged production or shipment of commodities which have since developed into great industries.

## LOCATING MARKETS FOR PRODUCERS

In many a community the producer has had his business horizon extended, his markets and patrons multiplied, and his success and products greatly increased through the special service rendered by the express com-



LOADING EARLY FRUIT AND VEGETABLES IN TEXAS.

pany and this without any additional cost to the shipper above the regular charges for transportation.

The following letter written to the American Express Company by the manager of a large fruit and vegetable growers' association is illustrative of the feeling of many



other similar organizations that are indebted to the express companies for services rendered:

“I wish to state from experience as Manager of this particular association that if we had not had the assistance of your company’s representative in the placement of our fruit and other products we would have lost the greater part of our crop, and would not have known where to place it. As it is, whenever we have a crop to move, we report to your representative what we have and the price we ask for the goods, he in turn reports it to your industrial agent, and the consequence is that we have to increase our acreage from year to year. Heretofore we have had the greater part of a small crop go to waste, which caused a great loss to us.

“Speaking of benefits derived from your company, it is beyond anyone’s power to say how much we have gained, and the losses that have been saved us by the attention given by your representative not alone to this association, but to every farmer no matter how large or small his crop.

“We were infants before you gave us your assistance, but now we are grown, and not alone that, but your company’s services and assistance have made our county one of the best in the State.”

## BENEFITS TO CONSUMERS,—TRANSPORT- ING FRESH FRUITS, VEGETABLES, &c.

Aside from the pioneer work of the express company in the direction of encouraging production, there is another point well worth mentioning, viz., the direct benefit of Express Service today to the consumer.

In order to market fresh fruit, vegetables, fish and similar commodities in distant parts of the country, two things are essential:

First—They must move on fast trains.

Second—The rates must be sufficiently low to assure the sale of the commodity at destination at living prices.

Express Service furnishes these facilities. Its special commodity rates enable the consumer to get fish, early fruit, vegetables and other food supplies from all sections of the country at *reasonable prices*.

## TRANSPORTATION OF MONEY, VALUABLES AND MERCHANDISE

The handling and transportation of parcels, merchandise, money and valuables is, of course, the fundamental element of the express business, and comprises an



immense list of different articles and commodities, some of which may be of interest to briefly note:

Adding Machines	Calves (Dressed and Alive)
Advertising Signs	Castings
Aeroplanes and Airships	Cars (Roller Coaster, Scenic
Agricultural Implements	Railway and Toboggan)
Animals, Birds and Reptiles (Alive)	Cereal Foods
Animals, Birds and Reptiles (Stuffed)	Chemical Engines
Articles packed in glass	Cigars
Automobiles and Tires	Coin (Gold and Silver)
Baskets	Corpses and Cremated Re-
Balloons	mains
Bees	Crab Meat, Live Crabs and
Bicycles	Crawfish
Boats	Currency
Bonds and Certificates of Stock	Cut Flowers
Books	Dress Forms
Bread	Eggs
Bullion (Gold and Silver)	Emery Wheels
Burial Cases and Vaults	Feathers
Butter and Cheese	Fertilizers
	Fish in Barrels and in Car-
	loads
	Flowers (Artificial)

Fruits (All kinds)	Meat (Fresh or cured)
Furniture (Bedsteads and Springs, Bookcases, Chairs, Refrigerators, Tables, &c.)	Merchandise
Furs and Skins	Milk and Cream
Game	Moving Picture Films
Greens, Holly, &c.	Musical Instruments
Glass	Newspapers, Magazines and Periodicals
Guns	Notes, Checks and Drafts for collection
Ice Cream	Oysters
Ladders, Poles, Spars, Tools or Implements	Oars
Lamps (Incandescent)	Oils
Liquor and Beer	Paintings and Pictures
Lithographic Stones	Phonographs and Records
Live Stock (Including Horses, Mules, Cattle, in carload and less than carload lots)	Plants
Lobsters	Poultry (Alive in coops and dressed)
Metal Work of all kinds	Seeds and Shrubs
Marble	Scenery
Mattresses	Sewing Machines
Machinery	Shafting
	Show Cases
	Slot Machines
	Soda Fountains



Slate  
Statuary  
Surveyors' Instruments  
Toys of all kinds  
Trees  
Typewriting Machines

Vacuum Cleaners  
Vegetables  
Vehicles and Wagons  
Water, (Spring and Mineral)  
X-Ray Machines  
X-Ray Tubes

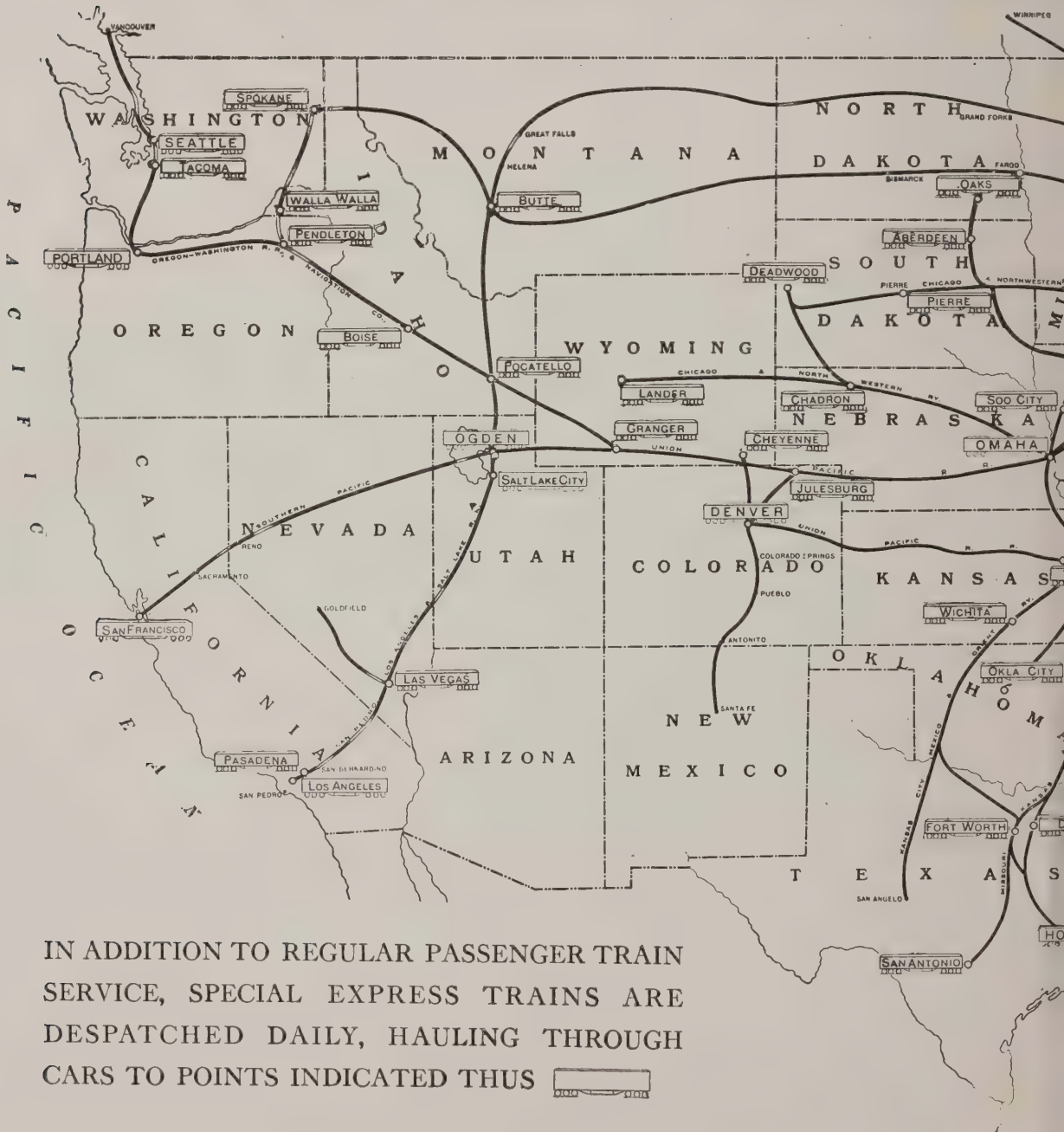


HORSE CAR INTERIOR.

HORSES ARE TRANSPORTED BY EXPRESS IN  
CARS SPECIALLY EQUIPPED FOR THEIR  
COMFORT AND SAFETY,

# AMERICAN EXPRESS THROUGH CARS

Effecting a Material Saving of Time at Junction Points and Insuring Goods Reaching Destination



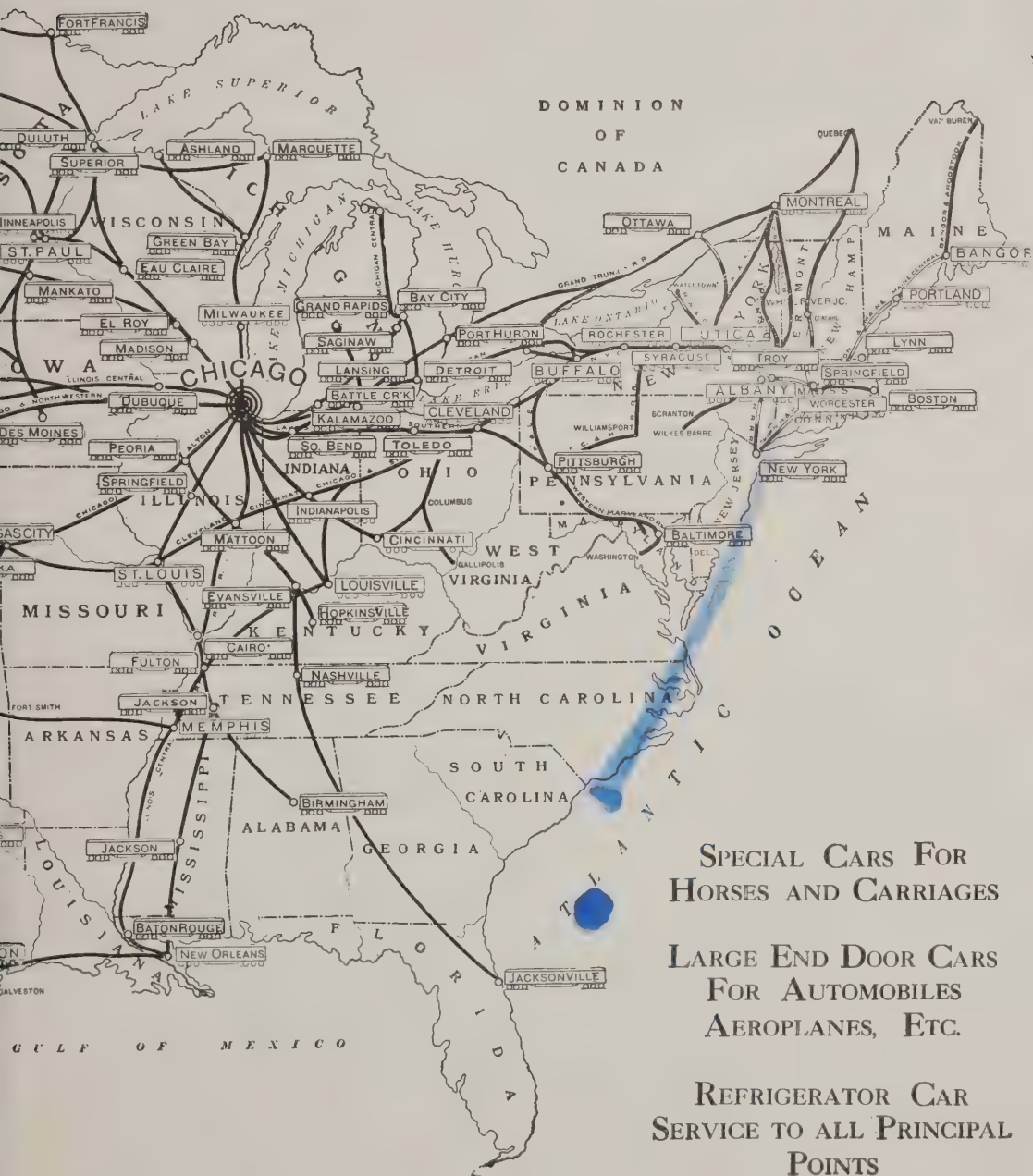
IN ADDITION TO REGULAR PASSENGER TRAIN SERVICE, SPECIAL EXPRESS TRAINS ARE DESPATCHED DAILY, HAULING THROUGH CARS TO POINTS INDICATED THUS



# EXPRESS COMPANY

## R SERVICE

ation in Better Condition than if Transferred from One Car to Another En Route



SPECIAL CARS FOR  
HORSES AND CARRIAGES

LARGE END DOOR CARS  
FOR AUTOMOBILES  
AEROPLANES, ETC.

REFRIGERATOR CAR  
SERVICE TO ALL PRINCIPAL  
POINTS

## THROUGH SERVICE FROM POINT OF ORIGIN TO DESTINATION

The express companies join into a single unit of service all of the numerous railroad lines of the country and thereby enable the shipper to deal with one carrier, avoid delays to goods at junction points, as well as damage in handling, and in various other ways facilitate the quick transportation of millions of shipments entrusted to their care.

A package shipped from New York via American Express Company destined to Los Angeles, Cal. is placed in a car and remains untouched until that car is unloaded at Los Angeles, a distance of 3,200 miles.

This car travels by special express train over the New York Central, Michigan Central, Chicago and North Western, Union Pacific and San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroads, and makes the trip in 3 days and 17 hours.

About fifty special express trains with 6 to 12 cars each, carrying express matter only, now traverse the United States from coast to coast and from Canada to Mexico every business day in the year. They are run at great speed and are routed to get every shipment to its destination most quickly,



regardless of ownership of railway lines over which they run.

One or more express cars are also attached to practically every through passenger train which can handle them and through car service is provided to the principal cities in the United States with special cars for automobiles, aeroplanes and live stock.

All these express cars are transferred between connecting railway lines precisely as Pullman cars are.

There is no delay at junction points to transfer responsibility because the Express Company assumes that responsibility.

## REFRIGERATOR CAR SERVICE

The refrigerator car is an important feature of the express service. Hundreds of such cars are in use



AMERICAN EXPRESS COMPANY'S SPECIAL REFRIGERATOR TRAIN FROM THE SOUTH.

between the leading cities and upon lines of railroad where large quantities of produce, berries, fruit, fish and early vegetables are transported.

The express refrigerator car service is an important factor in the elimination of waste in food supply. It has enriched the producer, given employment to thousands in rural communities and has placed within the reach of the congested populations of the great cities, commodities which otherwise would be considered a luxury.

Express Service insures immediate transportation in modern refrigerator cars of all perishable products, and their delivery in the best possible condition.

## VOLUME AND DETAIL OF EXPRESS

### BUSINESS

The express business is not only one of great volume, but one of great detail as well. During the last year approximately 300,000,000 shipments were transported by the express companies, every one of which had to be receipted for, weighed, priced, way-billed, transported, assorted at destination, written up on delivery sheets, and charges collected from consignee, unless prepaid.





OVER 40,000 SHIPMENTS DAILY ARE WAYBILLED, LABELED AND LOADED IN CARS  
AT NEW YORK BY AMERICAN EXPRESS CO., BETWEEN HOURS OF 6 AND 9 P. M.

## ERRORS EXTREMELY FEW

To perform this work, usually done under great pressure, the express companies must rely upon their employes for accuracy and thoroughness. Investigation will show, however, that the number of errors of expressmen is infinitesimal in comparison with the volume of transactions handled, and not relatively greater than exists in the most perfectly organized business establishments. Errors and omissions cannot be entirely avoided so long as human agencies are employed but they can be and are promptly rectified when discovered.

## FINANCIAL DEPARTMENTS

In line with other progressive measures for the benefit of the public, the American Express Company in 1882 devised and put in use what is now known as the Express Money Order, a substitute for the older method of forwarding by express small sums of money. This system gave the public better and more business-like facilities and modernized the old method of making such remittances.

## TRAVELERS CHEQUES

A few years later, in 1891, the same Company introduced its popular form of Travelers Cheques, which was brought to perfection after years of pioneer work and through the expenditure of thousands of dollars.

Over 150,000 travelers carried these Cheques during the past year, and the reason for their extended use can be easily explained.

The enjoyment and comfort of foreign travel depend largely upon the ease with which a traveler can pass along his chosen way, and while familiarity with the customs of a country and some knowledge of its language may be aids to that end, the funds one carries may be either a source of pleasure or the cause of much trouble, inconvenience and delay.



To avoid annoyance, travel funds should be of a kind and form that combine simplicity with quick and full returns upon encashment, and the largest measure of protection against loss in their varied uses.

The American Express Company's Travelers Cheque system is preeminent in all of these features and is a modern, economical, secure and satisfactory medium of carrying funds while traveling.

The establishment of exclusive offices at London, Paris, Liverpool, Glasgow, Southampton, Rome, Naples, Genoa, Havre, Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen, Antwerp, Rotterdam and Copenhagen enabled the



11 RUE SCRIBE, PARIS—HEADQUARTERS OF AMERICAN EXPRESS COMPANY IN EUROPE.

American Express Company to give the traveling public of this country the benefits of an American institution abroad, completely and fully equipped with facilities tending to promote the comfort and convenience of American travelers.

## FOREIGN DRAFTS AND CABLE TRANSFERS

The entrance of the American Express Company into this field led to changes in the methods theretofore in vogue of handling such transactions. Lists of foreign paying correspondents were materially increased, and the new competition tended to a reduction in rates. The result was a financial saving to importers and individual remitters who are now in a position to purchase exchange drawn direct on practically all points of the commercial world.

## FOREIGN FREIGHT AND CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT

In conjunction with its domestic forwarding business the American Express Company maintains a Foreign Freight Department for the transportation of express shipments of merchandise, parcels, baggage, valuables and securities, also freight consignments of small or carload lots by every class of ocean service to



and from foreign countries and the United States and Canada, and between its European offices and all parts of the world.



LIFT VANS WITHOUT WHEELS ARE FURNISHED FOR THE THROUGH TRANSPORTATION OF FURNITURE TO AND FROM EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES.

This department has also been the means of bringing together American and foreign buyers and sellers, manufacturers and distributors, encouraging business relations between them, with distinct benefit and stimulation to American trade development.

### EXPRESS COMPANIES' PROFITS

It has been charged that express companies by reason of high rates made enormous profits for many

years from their transportation operations, and thereby built up the large surplus now in their hands.

In a statement filed with the Interstate Commerce Commission during the recent express hearings, the American Express Company showed that from 1868 to June 30, 1911, its net earnings from transportation operations amounted to 6 cents on every dollar received, or, in other words, the Company paid out 94 cents in expenses to properly conduct its business.

This does not seem to be an unreasonable profit.

It was also shown that the net income of the Company from operation was \$50,928,523, and that dividends amounting to \$51,030,000 were paid—at an average rate of 6½% per annum.

Thus it will be seen that during a period of 43 years it has taken all the Company's earnings from operation to pay a not unreasonable yearly dividend.

The increase in American Express Company's surplus since 1868 came entirely from the accumulation of interest, dividends and rentals received from its investments and from profits realized in the sale of various securities from time to time.

## EXPRESS CHARGES NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR HIGH COST OF LIVING

The interesting topic of the day is "The high cost of living." One of the theories advanced, is that trans-



portation rates are responsible to no inconsiderable degree for the rapid advance in the cost of everything we eat.

A little investigation on this subject will convince any intelligent person that express transportation charges are not material factors in fixing the retail price of food products.

For example: Salmon are brought by express from the State of Washington to the Atlantic Coast in refrigerator cars and on the fastest passenger trains, a distance of over three thousand miles; the transportation charge is only 3 cents per pound, or 1 cent per pound for every thousand miles carried.

Express charges on dressed meat from Chicago to New York City and points similarly located is \$1.50 per hundred pounds, or 1½ cents per pound, including delivery at point of destination.

The charge for a 32-quart crate of berries from points in Louisiana, where berries first come in season, to St. Paul, Minn., is 48 cents per crate, or less than 2 cents per basket; Boston, Mass., 68 cents per crate or about 2 cents per basket.

What is true as to berries applies to all other fruits, apples, peaches, plums, pears, grapes, &c.

A single crate containing 30 dozen eggs can be shipped by express a distance of 60 or 75 miles for 35 cents or approximately 1 cent per dozen eggs.

Milk is carried by Express as low as 30 cents per 10 gallon can, and cream as low as 40 cents per 10 gallon can, which is practically a cent on a quart of each of these commodities.



LIVE FISH ARE SHIPPED BY EXPRESS IN SPECIALLY CONSTRUCTED TANK CARS.

Rates on butter in quantities are in many instances as low as four-tenths of a cent a pound.

These illustrations clearly demonstrate that the present high cost of living cannot be laid at the door of the express companies.

As a matter of fact, express rates on food products of all kinds are generally the same as, or lower than, they were in years past when the cost of living was less.

## NEW EXPRESS RATES

The Interstate Commerce Commission recently issued an order directing all Express Companies engaged in interstate commerce to put into effect for a period of two years, certain rates, rules and classifications.

The Express Companies have given this order the fullest consideration. Although the Companies have some doubt as to the outcome, they have concluded to put the new system and rates in effect, hoping to receive the co-operation of the commission, state commissions, and the public.

EXPRESS SERVICE OF GREAT  
IMPORTANCE TO THE  
AMERICAN PEOPLE

Referring to Express Companies and Express Service in this country, the Interstate Commerce Commission in the "Kindel Case" (decided April 14, 1908) stated in part:

"It requires ability of a high order to organize, systematize and keep in operation, the business of one of these companies \* \* \* \* \*. A sufficient profit should be allowed, so that this important part of the transportation business of this country may be conducted in a competent, and progressive manner."

and further stated, in connection with its decision of June 8, 1912, in the matter of Express Rates, Practices, etc., that the Express Company is an

"invaluable agency in the articulation of the railroad systems of the country for the furnishing of fast passage for small freight."



The United States Supreme Court in the case of the Memphis & Little Rock R. R. Co. against the Southern Express Co., etc.,—decided in 1885—stated:

“Such was the beginning of the express business, which now has grown to an enormous size, and is carried on all over the United States and in Canada, and has been extended to Europe and the West Indies. It has become a public necessity, and ranks in importance with the mails and with the telegraph. It employs for the purposes of transportation all the important railroads in the United States, and a new road is rarely opened to the public without being equipped in some form with express facilities. It is used in almost every conceivable way, and for almost every conceivable purpose, by the people and by the government. All have become accustomed to it and it cannot be taken away without breaking up many of the long settled habits of business, and interfering materially with the convenience of social life.”

The important feature of Express Service as rendered by private companies is the *personal* element behind it. Each man is working in the Company's interest as well as for his own promotion and it is the man behind the package, interested in seeing that shipments reach their destination on time and are not damaged in transit, that

...s the Express Company's service of commercial value to shippers.

The conduct of the Express business of this country can never be successful unless the men who have the power, the authority and the responsibility are in close working touch with the everyday problems, conditions and atmosphere of the shipping interests of the country.

These expressmen, by reason of their years of experience, are eminently fitted to meet successfully the perplexing traffic problems that constantly confront the commercial interests of the country, and they stand ready at all times to co-operate with shippers with a view of promoting business activities and building up new fields of industry.



EXPRESS SERVICE REQUIRES THE IMMEDIATE DELIVERY  
OF SHIPMENTS AT DESTINATION—SCENE IN A WEST-  
ERN CITY AFTER ARRIVAL OF NEW  
YORK TRAIN.



We believe that the merchants of the United States also recognize the value and need of Express Service in their business and will not be satisfied to accept any medium for the transmission of shipments that does not afford equal time, personal service and efficiency.

It has required unceasing endeavor extending over a period of seventy years and the expenditure and investment of many millions of dollars to establish and develop these world-wide express organizations with their ample accommodations and representation in every country of the globe where Americans seek business or pleasure, and to so perfect their system that *business of any character can be transacted by simple, inexpensive and convenient methods*, and safeguarded by one single responsible agency from point of origin to destination.











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